

Message Text

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E. O. 11652: DECON AFTER MARCH 30, 1977

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: ANDREOTTI AND TANASSI TANGLE OVER RENEWED CENTER- LEFT

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: SOCIAL DEMOCRAT LEADER TANASSI HAS PUBLICLY PROPOSED EARLY TALKS LOOKING TO EVENTUAL REINSTITUTION OF CENTER-LEFT, BUT HAS PLEDGED CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR PRESENT GOVT IN MEAN-TIME. PRIMIN ANDREOTTI HAS RESPONDED WITH FORCEFUL DENIAL THAT PSI HAS AS YET QUALIFIED ITSELF FOR RENEWED GOVT ROLE. FORTHCOM-ING ECONOMIC DEBATE IN CHAMBER WILL AFFORD BOTH OCCASION FOR FURTHER POLEMICS AND TESTING GROUND FOR GOVT COHESIVENESS. END SUMMARY.

2. VICE PRIMIN AND PRE- EMINENT SOCIAL DEMOCRAT LEADER MARIO TANASSI HAS CAUSED POLITICAL STIR IN INTERVIEW WITH NEWS- WEEKLY " PANAORAMA" DECLARING PSDI MUST TAKE IMMEDIATE INITIATIVE TOWARD EVENTUAL RE-PLACEMENT OF PRESENT GOVT WITH CENTER- LEFT COALITION. TANASSI CALLED ON PSDI DIRECTORATE (WHICH MEETS APRIL 4) TO AUTHORIZE BI-LATERAL DISCUSSIONS TOWARD THAT END BETWEEN PSDI AND ALL OTHER DEMOCRATIC PARTIES, WHICH IF SUCCESSFUL WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY JOINT NEGOTIATIONS AMONG PROSPECTIVE PARTNERS. TANASSI EMPHASIZED THAT PSDI WILL INSIST UPON RIGOROUS AUTONOMY OF MAJORITY, UNCONDITIONED BY COMMUNISTS, AND ALSO THAT CENTER- LEFT FORMULA BE APPLIED AT LOCAL GOVT LEVEL WHEREVER POSSIBLE. HE SAID SHIFT OF LIBERALS BACK TO OPPOSITION " WOULD NOT BE A TRAGEDY," BUT WOULD INSTEAD " DENY MSI MONOPOLY OF OPPOSITION ON RIGHT." TANASSI ALSO STATED THAT PENDING ULTIMATE RECONSTRUCTION OF CENTER- LEFT PRESENT GOVT MUST BE LOYALLY SUPPORTED.

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3. BID CAME AS SURPRISE EVEN TO OTHER LEADERS OF TANASSI' S OWN PARTY, WHOSE REACTION HAS BEEN CAUTIOUS AND RESERVED. PSDI SECY ORLANDI HASTENED TO EXCLUDE ANY CRISIS PRIOR TO JUNE DC CONGRESS, AND PLEDGED FULL PSDI LOYALTY TO ANDREOTTI GOVT UNTIL FULL ACCORD HAS BEEN REACHED UPON ALTERNATIVE. REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADER LA MALFA SAID THAT TANASSI' S INITIATIVE DESERVES ENCOURAGEMENT, BUT WARNED THAT FAILURE OF CENTER- LEFT FOR SECOND TIME COULD PRESENT ITALY WITH FULL BLOWN INSTITUTIONAL CRISIS. SOCIALIST MAJORITY SPOKESMEN WERE JUBILANT, ALTHOUGH SOURCE CLOSE TO DE MARTINO HAS HINTED TO US THAT TANASSI' S MOVE MAY HAVE BEEN PREMATURE FROM PSI STANDPOINT. PRINCIPAL PSI MINORITY LEADER MANCINI WELCOMED EVIDENCE OF CENTRISM' S IMPENDING COLLAPSE BUT REITERATED THAT PSI WILL NEVER ACCEPT " MODERATE" VERSION OF CENTER- LEFT ENVISIONED BY TANASSI.

4. PRIMIN ANDREOTTI LAUNCHED SHARP COUNTERATTACK MARCH 26 IN SPEECH AT SMALL TOWN OF SORA NEAR ROME. IN PAST YEAR, HE ASSERTED, SOCIALISTS HAVE NOT BEEN OSTRACIZED BY ANYONE BUT THEMSELVES, AND HAVE DONE NOTHING TO AGAIN RENDER THEMSELVES ACCEPTABLE GOVT PARTNERS. RESUMPTION OF PSI- DC DIALOGUE, HE CONTINUED, IS HARDLY FURTHERED BY PSI' S INCREASING DISPOSITION TO FORM FRONTIST GOVTS IN REGIONS AND AT LOCAL LEVEL, ITS OFFENSIVE AND PROVOCATIVE SUBMISSION OF ABORTION BILL AND ITS HAVING MADE ITSELF ONLY POLITICAL FORCE TO DEFEND LEFT- WING " ANTI- PARLIAMENTARIANS." ANDREOTTI RECOUNTED IN MINUTE DETAIL CIRCUMSTANCES OF CENTER- LEFT' S DOWNFALL AND RESULTANT EARLY ELECTIONS, AND WARNED THAT " SPIRIT OF MAY 1972" IS STILL PREVAILING THEME OF NATIONAL POLITICAL SENTIMENT, WHICH MAY BE IGNORED BY DEMOCRATIC PARTIES ONLY AT GRAVE RISK. ALTHOUGH FUTURE ORIENTATION OF DC WILL PROPERLY BE CHIEF ISSUE AT CONGRESS, HE ADDED, THERE IS NO ASSURANCE THAT POST- CONGRESS PERIOD WILL BE RIPE FOR RENEWED DIALOGUE WITH PSI, NO MATTER HOW DESIRABLE.

5. ANDREOTTI' S RETORT EVOKED STRONG SUPPORT FROM DC CHAMBE FLOOR LEADER PICCOLI, SENATE DC FLOOR LEADER SPAGNOLLI, AND,
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